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The problem of 'international influentials'

"Disinformation," or *dezinformatsia*, as the Soviets call it, comes on many levels. With the Western democracies, chiefly the United States, as its target, the Soviet KGB aims to so pervert reality and truth as to make the target peoples and the target public opinion willingly accept Soviet lies as ideological gospel.

There is the plain and outright lie: for examples, KGB propaganda in India that the United States is responsible for the assassination of Mrs. Indira Gandhi, or KGB circulation of forged speeches or memoranda by U.S. officials among Soviet-subsidized and controlled media. That kind of mendacity works usually in countries with low literacy and a powerful pro-Soviet centralized government, which India is.

There are other varieties of "disinformation" or, in the Soviet phrase, "active measures," but one of the most important KGB assets in the democracies with high literacy and political participation is the "agent of influence."

There are two kinds, broadly speaking, of agents of influence, according to the recent book, *Dezinformatsia* by Professors Richard Shultz and Roy Godson. There is, first, the "controlled agent of influence," who is recruited and who advances the interests of a foreign power in response to specific orders and direction.

The second is an unwitting but manipulated agent of influence, who listens to what the Shultz-Godson book calls the "trusted contact," a person not formally recruited and not under tight direction. In all cases, witting or unwitting, their actions invariably support the Soviet foreign policy line.

Sometimes, in order to strengthen the agent of influence's credibility, faint demurrers may be heard about some particularly reprehensible Soviet action, but the usual reaction in such cases is silence. This category of agent of influence differs

from a traitor like Alger Hiss because he is not usually involved in espionage or in surrendering his country's secrets to the KGB.

The unwitting agent of influence, however, is one who for various reasons finds it easier to denounce his own country's political and diplomatic behavior while explaining away the political and diplomatic behavior of an adversary. Such an agent of influence, one can say in a kindly fashion, may be imbued with a sense of mission and a moral afflatus, an overwhelming sense of his own rectitude and a fear, perhaps an irrational fear, that the world will come to an end unless he intervenes to save it by speaking prophetically to an accursed people.

An agent of influence of this sort is difficult to counter because he may have achieved a glowing reputation as a scholar, statesman, or scientist and, therefore, his words will be heard and widely disseminated. And, second, one can assume that as a believer he needs no guidance from an outside agency like the KGB, except, perhaps, for the occasional opportunity to see a confidential Soviet document whose contents might strengthen his conviction that he is absolutely right in pursuing his

goal of weakening an aggressive United States or seeking to minimize hostility toward, as he would define it, a fundamentally peaceful but neurotic Soviet Union.

This second category of agent of influence may be unknowingly working with a KGB intermediary or "trusted contact."

I would propose a third category to include publicists who are neither witting nor unwitting pro-Soviet agents of influence, yet who almost always are on the side of Moscow in any conflict between the U.S.S.R. and the West.

I would call them international influentials — I-I's — who by reason of experience, high intelligence, or prestige of office are listened to when they speak supportively, as they do with some consistency, of Soviet foreign policy and negatively of U.S. or NATO foreign policy.

Willy Brandt, former chancellor of West Germany and a one-time fearsome anti-Communist, especially when he was mayor of West Berlin, would be an I-I. However, in recent years he has so overdone his pro-Soviet activities that few, either in Germany or in the West, now take him seriously. Since his office had been successfully penetrated by the KGB while he was chancellor (his confidential secretary had been a

longtime Soviet agent), there is concern that the Soviets have so compromised him that he has no alternative but to follow Kremlin directives.

In Canada, former Prime Minister Pierre Elliot Trudeau would be an I-I. Premier Olaf Palme of Sweden is assuredly an I-I, since his criticisms of Soviet foreign policy are, if any, few and far between, while his criticisms of the United States are unending.

In the United States, I am persuaded that George Kennan has become, among leading American intellectuals, the most important I-I in the nation. I have felt this for a long time, ever since I read his account of a visit to a small Danish port, which he wrote was "swarming with hippies — motor bikes, girl friends, drugs, pornography, drunkenness, noise — it was all there." And then he adds, (I had to read Mr. Kennan's next sentence twice to believe it) in what can only be a voice of repressed *schadenfreude*:

"I looked at this mob and thought how one company of robust Russian infantry would drive it out of town."

Afghanistan, Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia — "robust Russian infantry"?

There is currently on the newsstands a mordant examination of Mr. Kennan's writings, "The Two Faces of George Kennan: From Containment to 'Understanding'" in the summer issue of *Policy Review*.

The author is Professor Paul Hollander, whose earlier volume *Political Pilgrims* was a masterful history of the Communist fellow travelers.

Sometime next winter, Professor Paul Seabury of Berkeley will publish in the new quarterly magazine, *National Interest*, a wide-ranging analysis of Mr. Kennan, who remains a permanent and sturdy pillar of the foreign policy establishment.

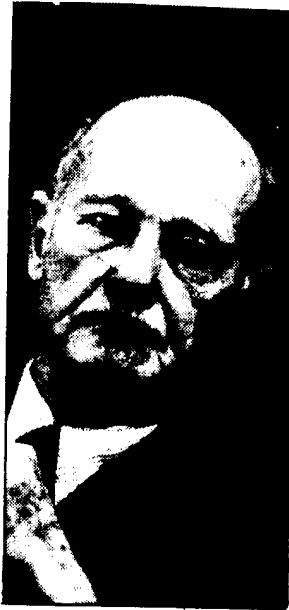
Mr. Hollander's examination of Mr. Kennan's writings is devastating. It shows the one-time State Department official and U.S. ambassador to have ranged himself solidly on the side of the Soviet Union in every major conflict with the United States. Mr. Kennan is more than just an apologist for the Soviet Union. His fulminations against American culture, the system of government, his dislike of his fellow Americans would make one think he was readying himself to depart the land of his birth.

During the worst days of the New-Left-SDS-Weatherman terrorism and at the height of Tom Hayden's billingsgate crusade against America, I did not read anything as vicious, as sick-making, as pernicious as Mr. Kennan's atrocious assault, through his writings and lectures, on his country, his countrymen, and on our beleaguered democratic system. He writes in a faintly weary but elegant prose, and it makes you wonder whatever happened to the Kennan who once preached a doctrine of containment of the Soviet Union, a land whose leaders, he said, were not to be trusted and with whom no friendly relations were possible.

In reading what Mr. Kennan has been writing, I thought of the words of Shakespeare, in the voice of Ophelia, about Hamlet:

O, what a noble mind is here o'erthrown! The courtier's, soldier's, scholar's, eye, tongue, sword;

... Now see that noble and most sovereign reason, like sweet bells jangled, out of tune and harsh. ...



George Kennan



Willy Brandt



Pierre Elliot Trudeau



Olaf Palme